



Ten Strategies for a Successful Building Safety Week

1 Distribute the Building Safety Week Information available from ICC to help your community learn how to protect its citizens and cope with disasters by planning ahead. A BSW Kit is available that includes brochures, coloring and activity books, posters, a press release, news articles, logos, pencils and stickers that can be fun for all ages.

2 Distribute the BSW poster to city and county offices, hardware stores, building materials suppliers, schools, banks, libraries and other public-access buildings.

3 Create Awareness Programs by cosponsoring programs on code enforcement activities in conjunction with relevant engineering, architectural and building code courses at local universities and colleges. Establish a speaker's bureau comprised of guest lecturers for building technology classes, civic organizations and related business associations. These lecturers should include building, fire, electrical and mechanical inspectors who can explain how their inspections impact the safety of the built environment.

4 Host a Building Department Open House during Building Safety Week. Use newspaper and radio announcements to invite the members of general public, schools, civic clubs, and managers and employees from related businesses such as plumbing, heating and air-conditioning companies as well as employees of lumber yards, hardware stores, and electrical contractors. Arrange and schedule tours of the department by staff members and include everything from the permit counter to the code interpretation section. Prepare handout materials to distribute at the end of each tour.

5 Sponsor an Emergency Preparedness Program. Every community could eventually face a natural catastrophe of some sort from an earthquake, flood, tornado, hurricane or fire. Most communities are ill-prepared to handle the crisis. You can instruct members of the public on what their building department can and will do for them during an emergency and how they can help themselves, their neighbors and public officials. Present scenarios about what people can do today to protect their homes and families from a disaster in the future. Prepare a slide or video presentation showing a walk-through inspection of a typical residence. Show hazards which may exist and how these hazards may be eliminated through action by the homeowner.

6 Plan a Model Building Inspection by sponsoring an "in-the-field open house" at a construction site with the permission and assistance of local builders. Take architectural, engineering and building technology students, realtors, new home builders, and prospective new home buyers on mock electrical, mechanical, structural and plumbing inspections of several houses in various phases of construction. Such an event might be an excellent way to increase media coverage. Notify them of the time and location. Kids can do an in-home inspection using Cody the Cougar's activity book available in the BSW materials.

7 Organize Building Community Participation by enlisting the aid of city, county and state building departments and building officials' organizations, the building community, and state and local elected officials. All have something to contribute. Form a steering committee to plan and oversee BSW activities statewide and within local jurisdictions.

8 Promote and support a Building Technology Career Day. As complex new techniques, products and equipment evolve in the fire- and life-safety professions, building departments need to attract their community's brightest and best people. Invite local colleges, high schools and human resource agencies to take part in a program designed to introduce career-oriented people to the occupation of code enforcement.

9 Encourage Media Coverage by sending a press release to newspapers and radio stations. Encourage local newspapers to cover BSW activities and send public service announcements on BSW to local radio stations. You could also arrange to appear on a talk/community information show through your local television or radio station. Include a call-in question-and-answer session as part of the program to generate even more interest.

10 Solicit BSW Proclamations by asking the governor and mayor to issue proclamations for a local and statewide Building Safety Week. Working with the governor, mayor or both can be one of the more productive BSW projects you undertake. Receiving an official proclamation for Building Safety Week will validate your efforts. A sample proclamation is enclosed with ICC's BSW kit. If possible, arrange to have a photographer present at the signing.

Be sure to include a BSW wrap-up at chapter or building department meetings. Exchange ideas with various jurisdictions to find out what worked well for other cities and counties, and plan to incorporate new and innovative ideas for the next Building Safety Week.



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